



POSITION STATEMENT

Arkansas Administrators Support Common Core State Standards



The Arkansas Association of Curriculum and Instruction Administrators (AACIA) and the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (AAEA) supports the implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS). These standards, developed by the National Governors Association, were written to clearly and consistently describe what students should be able to accomplish at each grade level; further, they were designed to be robust and relevant to college and career. AACIA believes that American students deserve to graduate ready to compete in college or career with graduates from other countries, and these standards provide a pathway for higher educational attainment.

If America is to compete with other countries in a global economy, and if Americans hope to participate in an educated society, students must achieve at higher levels. Hanushek and Woessmann demonstrate that the growth rate a nation's gross domestic product (GDP) is very closely related to the level of international test scores in math and science. In other words, much of America's economic success depends on our children's achievement in math and science. How are we doing in math? In 2010, only 6 percent of U.S. students performed at advanced levels of math, a percentage lower than those attained in 30 other countries. In 2011 only 32 percent of 8th-graders in the United States were proficient in mathematics, placing the United State 32nd among competing nations. While the United States has made moderate growth over the last 14 years, with the implementation of state standards and accountability, it is modest when compared to the 24 countries who are growing at a faster rate.¹

One principle guiding improvement in academic performance is the establishment of standards that raise the expected learning goals for students. By providing this set of common rigorous standards throughout the United States, families who relocate to another state would face similar grade level expectations. These standards identify *what* a child is to learn. This, for example, is a Common Core Standard for reading informational at the 7th grade:

RI.7.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.

Common Core Standards established a staircase of complexity, but do not dictate to teachers or school districts how to teach or what to read. The mathematics standards provide a solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions and decimals at the elementary levels. Students will be enabled to successfully understand more demanding math applications in secondary learning. The standards, which follow successful international models, expect high school math students to develop a depth of understanding to apply mathematics in relevant and novel situations just as college students and business professionals do in the workplace.

Arkansas educators began teaching Common Core Standards in school year 2011-12. A benefit for Arkansas students during implementation has been the quality training which continues to increase teachers' depth of content knowledge.

While Common Core Standards are a first step that will help graduate a more educated American student, it is a gigantic leap towards progress. Arkansas citizens must continue to participate in education, support progress through innovative ideas, and commit to providing children the best quality of instruction available anywhere. Through these efforts, America won't just keep up with the progress of other competing countries; she will exceed the economic, technological, and educational challenges of the future.

1. Hanushek, E., Peterson, P., and Woessmann L., (2012). *Achievement Growth: International and U.S. State Trends in Student Performance* (Report No.: 12-03), Cambridge, MA, Harvard Kennedy School.

